

**REMARKS**

Claims 1, 4 and 25-38 are pending, with claims 1 and 4 being independent. Claims 2-3 and 5-24 have previously been cancelled.

Claims 1, 4, 26, 30, and 33-36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,877,492 to Fujieda et al. (Fujieda) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,835,142 to Nakamura et al. (Nakamura). Applicant notes, for clarity, that these claims appear to have been mistakenly listed in paragraph 3 of the Office Action as claims 1-6, 26, 30, and 33-36

Claims 27, 28, 31, and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fujieda in view of Nakamura and further in view of Applicant's Admitted Prior Art (AAPA). Claims 25 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fujieda in view of Nakamura and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,421,468 to Ratnakar et al. (Ratnakar).

Regarding the rejection of independent claims 1 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fujieda in view of Nakamura, Applicant respectfully submits that, even taken together, these two references do not disclose or properly suggest all of the features recited in claims 1 and 4. For example, independent claim 1 recites:

A sensor arranged with a plurality of unit pixels each comprising a sensor circuit portion and a plurality of irradiation window portions, said sensor comprising:  
an optical fiber plate between the sensor circuit portion and a reading object, said optical fiber plate comprising an optical fiber,  
wherein said optical fiber comprises a core, a clad and an absorbing layer,  
wherein said clad is provided over said core,  
wherein said absorbing layer is provided over said clad, and  
wherein light incident on one end of the optical fiber is propagated in the core.

In rejection claim 1, the Office Action admits that Fujieda does not disclose or properly suggest an optical fiber plate having all of the claimed elements of a core, a clad, and an absorbing layer, wherein the absorbing layer is over the clad, which is itself provided over the core. Instead, the Office Action relies on Nakamura for this teaching.

Nakamura discloses (see FIG. 2) illumination of document 10 through an optical absorber 15d and a clad 15b of optical fiber 15a, and that light from LED array 19 is incident in an oblique direction to the optical fiber array of Nakamura. That is, oblique light from array 19 passes through the optical absorber 15d of the optical fiber 15a of Nakamura.

In contrast, claim 1, as amended, requires that light incident on one end of the optical fiber is propagated in the core, so that the function of the claimed absorbing layer is to absorb excess light. This feature is supported in the specification at, for example, page 33, lines 3-15, and illustrated, for example, in FIGS. 14 and 15.

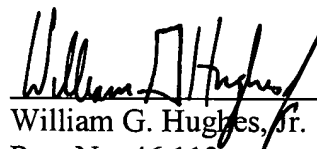
Since neither Nakamura nor Fujieda, whether taken alone or in combination, discloses or properly suggests at least this feature, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is in condition for allowance. Independent claim 4, which recites a similar combination of features, is therefore also believed to be in condition for allowance for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, dependent claims 25-38 are believed to be in condition for allowance for at least the same reasons.

Based on the above, all claims are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is hereby requested in the Examiner's next official communication.

Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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